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Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman M. **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(item 4 (b))

Evaluation of sustainable development

1. At its second and fourth meetings, on 11 and 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of sustainable development (E/AC.51/2001/2).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. Representatives of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee considered that the evaluation report provides an understanding of the achievements as well as the difficulties met in carrying out the United Nations sustainable development agenda.

4. The view was expressed that, since 1992, when Agenda 21 was adopted, the United Nations has taken important steps to ensure an effective follow-up. However, it was stated that the lack of common understanding of the concept of sustainable development is a matter that requires inter-agency attention, as recommended in the evaluation report's recommendations 2.a and 2.b. Regarding recommendation 2.a

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and the recommended summaries of main policy aspects of priority issues, the view was expressed that poverty and consumption and production patterns should be among the major issues for discussion rather than the sole basis for discussion, and that the summaries should serve as a starting point for discussions.

5. It was stressed that the preparation of national reports is a burden for less developed countries. The question was raised of what benefits are derived from the preparation of these reports and what follow-up is carried out. Strong support was expressed for the proposals to bring forth key information in time for due consideration by intergovernmental bodies, while reducing their reporting burdens, as presented in recommendation three.

6. The Committee stressed the need to ensure that regional, subregional and national perspectives are taken into account since each region has its own characteristics. It was stated that sustainable efforts in each region will reinforce achievements at the global level. It was considered that the role of the regional commissions needs to be expanded. The view was expressed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs needs to consult more widely with all relevant actors and build on existing guidance in taking forward national strategies. It was recommended that national monitoring of nationally owned strategies be encouraged.

7. In respect of the inter-agency Task Force on Sustainable Development Strategies, coordinated by UNDP, a question was raised on the progress of the work of the Task Force. The view was expressed that the Commission on Sustainable Development indicators should be used as a tool by national Governments to assess their own progress on sustainable development, rather than as a cross-cutting international effort to compare one country to another.

8. The view was expressed that it is essential to ensure a convergence between different country-level frameworks, especially in trying to ensure that poverty reduction strategies become genuinely sustainable strategies. In particular, it was considered that the recently agreed OECD Development Assistance Committee guidance entitled "Strategies for sustainable development: practical guidance for development cooperation" provides a good basis for work.

9. Concerns were expressed about the difficulty of funding technical assistance implemented by the Division for Sustainable Development. Regarding the serious issue of water resources, a question was raised on the funding available for comprehensive assessments on which strategic water management plans can be based. It was suggested that the Division for Sustainable Development conduct a strategic review of its technical assistance activities so as to focus on areas of particular need and on where assistance can make a unique contribution.

10. The view was expressed that the evaluation focused too narrowly on the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular that it would have been useful to assess the influence of coordination by the Division on the implementation of United Nations programmes. A number of thematic aspects could have been developed, such as poverty alleviation or progress made under the different conventions related to sustainable development.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended approval of the recommendations of the in-depth evaluation.

12. The Committee recommended that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs consult more widely with all relevant organs and build on existing guidance in taking forward national strategies.

13. The Committee emphasized that national monitoring of nationally owned strategies should be encouraged.

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(item 4 (b))

Evaluation of the population programme

1. At its 2nd and 4th meetings, on 11 and 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the population programme (E/AC.51/2001/3).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. Representatives of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The view was expressed that the evaluation report provides a good and integrated account of United Nations population activities.

4. The Population Division was commended for the high quality of its reports, particularly its work on population ageing and the recent report on replacement migration, and the success of the population information network, POPIN. The view was also expressed that the reports of the Population Division, such as the report on replacement migration, are weak, and that the timeliness of some of its publications should be improved. The Division should make more use of reliable country data

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and assist countries in strengthening systems for routine data collection, issues too wide a range of reports and should focus more on poverty and emerging policy issues and the data needs of developing countries. The view was expressed that due to financial constraints the regional commissions are not in a position to carry forward their work and their outputs are of variable quality.

5. The use of the Internet for the dissemination of information on population should not affect the use of traditional methods of distribution of documents. The same should apply to the regional commissions concerning the distribution of publications, and this was highlighted in recommendation 3.

6. Concern was expressed over the decrease in resources devoted to the programme, especially in the regional commissions. An inquiry was made on whether ESCWA had been given the necessary resources to post information on the Internet, as highlighted in recommendation 4 (c). The view was also expressed that the evaluation reports should not make recommendations regarding budgetary and financial requirements but rather determine the necessity of a particular activity. The importance of financing the programme from the regular budget and not from extrabudgetary resources was reiterated since the use of the latter could put the programme in financial difficulties and weaken its implementation capability, and this was highlighted in recommendation 10.

Conclusion and recommendation

7. The Committee recommended the approval of the recommendations contained in the in-depth evaluation of the population programme, and that the Population Division improve its work in the following areas:

(a) The use of reliable country data;

(b) Helping countries to strengthen systems of routine data collection;

(c) Inclusion of a poverty focus within some of its analysis;

(d) Inclusion of the important dimension of the environment in its research;

(e) Coordination of efforts in maintaining the two web sites (POPIN and the Division web site) to reduce any duplication;

(f) Dissemination of information through the Internet to ensure that no information is available solely through sales publications.

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(Item 4 (b))

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme

1. At its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 11 and 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (E/AC.51/2001/4).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. Representatives of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee expressed appreciation for the significant progress made through the joint efforts of UNDCP and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the implementation of a number of the Committee's recommendations made three years ago. Support to the International Narcotics Control Board and UNDCP as important

mechanisms against the world drug problem was reaffirmed. It was stressed that the report could be a useful tool for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its implementation of the resolution on strengthening UNDCP and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body.

4. It was observed that UNDCP needed to implement more fully CPC recommendations in a number of areas. Dissatisfaction was expressed with aspects of the drug control programme, which, it was felt, the Office of Internal Oversight Services should keep under review. It was stressed that the management of UNDCP is in need of attention. It was noted that 60 per cent of UNDCP funds for the implementation of operational activities are allocated to agencies of the United Nations and other organizations, which reflects the level of coordination with other relevant agencies. However, concern was expressed regarding the high number of references in the triennial review to a lack of coordination or collaboration in different areas, within UNDCP and with other relevant agencies. UNDCP is expected to coordinate its activities with relevant parties and collaborate in activities where it is efficient and effective to do so. It was stated that any review of programme priorities and the evaluation of programme results should be done in collaboration with participating partners. The view was expressed that the publication of two reports on the world drug situation, as reported in paragraph 6 of the evaluation report, represents a duplication of efforts.

5. Concern was expressed that a number of programmes in the areas of demand reduction, monitoring and elimination of illicit crops have not received the expected voluntary contributions. The substantive service provided by UNDCP to the twentieth special session of the General Assembly will be taken into account. It was noted that UNDCP had met the expectations of the special session in designing new programmes to address the drug problem. It was underlined that, regarding priority setting and the funding of activities raised in paragraph 34 of the evaluation report, UNDCP is mainly funded through voluntary contributions, and that the impact of this mode of funding should be taken into account.

6. The view was expressed that the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations had been requested by CPC before the twentieth special session, and that this element should have been reflected in the report. The main thrust of the review was to closely monitor the consequences of merging the drug control and crime prevention programmes and to evaluate the possible synergies.

7. The view was expressed that the criticism in paragraphs 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31 of the evaluation report, regarding specialized information and the formulation of strategies, refers mainly to the methodological approach rather than to the different roles of the relevant elements involved in the drug control programme.

8. It was noted that, regarding the issue of the collection and processing of information, which is one of the problems raised in the evaluation report, the Commission has taken steps to streamline the questionnaires sent to Governments.

9. Concern was expressed that UNDCP, in reporting on national trends, has used data drawn from sources other than the national official data reported to the programme.

10. The recommendations were not in bold as requested by the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the latest being its resolution 55/222. Doubt was expressed on the mandate that authorizes UNDCP to review and evaluate national and multilateral legislations, as highlighted in recommendation 2.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee took note of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (E/AC.51/2001/4).

12. The Committee reiterated its recommendations at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of UNDCP, and drew the attention of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the governing body of UNDCP, to considering and following up these recommendations.

13. The Committee encouraged UNDCP to further strengthen its efforts to ensure the availability of funding for the implementation of its programmes.

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(Item 4 (b))

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme

1. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 11 and 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-eighth session on the in-depth evaluation of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme (E/AC.51/2001/5).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. The representative of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Concern and disappointment were expressed at the lack of implementation of many of the recommendations adopted by the Committee three years ago. In particular, disappointment was expressed that neither the in-depth evaluation report nor the CPC conclusions and recommendations on it were submitted to the

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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its eighth session, as requested by CPC. It was stated that the integration of mandates into the programme should be carried out as recommended in order to improve the focus of the programme. The view was expressed that, although the report stated that recommendation one on strategic management has been implemented, there are still issues outstanding, such as the appropriate attention to be given to some activities related to crime prevention and criminal justice. It was underlined that the programme should devote more attention to its original mandates in favour of crime prevention and criminal justice to counterbalance the excessive attention given to organized crime.

4. It was noted that mechanisms are in place for monitoring standards and norms, but that there is little or no evidence that the recommendation to improve the monitoring has been carried out. Proposals to the twelfth session of the Commission on a revised mechanism for reporting on standards and norms and minimizing the reporting burden on Member States should reflect and incorporate any related proposals made as a follow-up to the related suggestions of the Executive Director to the Commission at its tenth session.

5. The lack of a public information strategy was noted. The suggestion was made that the Centre should consider drawing more on the expertise of the Department of Public Information in developing its information strategy. The tenfold increase in visits to the Centre's web site was noted. The proposal that a focus group discussion be held among the representatives of major user groups of the programme's publications was endorsed on the understanding that it would be done within existing resources.

6. The view was expressed that follow-up work on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime should be a priority area in the programme. It was also felt that the three global programmes give too much attention to organized crime and not enough to other issues.

7. The Centre should develop a fund-raising strategy in order to avoid an ad hoc approach to funding. This strategy should not be seen as an end in itself but used as a management tool.

Conclusion and recommendation

8. The Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended the approval of the conclusions of the triennial review and the proposed reviews by OIOS contained in them.

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(*Item 4 (b)*)

Future evaluation reports

1. At its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 11 and 12 June 2001, as part of its discussion of the evaluation reports submitted to it, the Committee discussed the evaluation process itself.

2. Representatives of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of this issue.

Future topics for in-depth evaluation

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 11 June 2001, the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, in his introduction of the evaluation item, suggested the following topics for in-depth evaluation by CPC at its forty-third session, in 2003: "Law of the sea", "Human rights" and "Social development".

Discussion

4. The view was expressed that evaluations carried out at the 10-year point or triennial reviews of the implementation of CPC recommendations are of little value to the Committee. The evaluation process should be an annual process, producing timely information by programme managers that should be fully covered in the budget fascicle submissions. This should include all necessary programmatic information, including the views of relevant participants in the programme. Annual

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evaluations would allow programme managers to provide clear objectives stating the necessity, or otherwise, of programmes. This information would be presented to CPC. CPC needs this information to allow it to review and assess the value and necessity, or otherwise, of a programme. The Committee would then make recommendations to the General Assembly on the relevance and effectiveness of a programme and on which a decision to provide funding would be made.

5. The view was expressed that there is a continued requirement for evaluations to show results of programmes, including the impact of their results on programme design, delivery and policy directives; that there is a greater requirement for monitoring and evaluation of programmes, particularly where this relates to national strategies; and that evaluation reports need to be succinct and easy to read, with less use of jargon and shorter narratives, and should also be referenced to programmatic activity in relation to objectives and accomplishments as related to the recommendations.

6. The role of the regional commissions needs to be expanded on, in particular the relationship between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions and other actors, either at United Nations Headquarters and/or in the field, and needs greater explanation with regard to policy development objective-setting and implementation.

7. The view was expressed that there should be a recommendation in all evaluation reports that the relevant specialized intergovernmental bodies should review evaluation reports prior to the CPC review and submit their observations on them to CPC. It was acknowledged that there were problems of timing with this proposal due to the timetable of meetings of these bodies.

8. The view was expressed that it is not appropriate for evaluation reports to contain recommendations on the source of funding for Secretariat activities, or such phrases as "within existing resources" or "if resources are available". The appropriate recommendation should address the issue of whether or not an activity is necessary, and leave decisions on funding to the budgetary process.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The Committee recommended that evaluation reports be submitted expeditiously to the relevant organs for their consideration.

10. The Committee reaffirmed the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and recommended that the General Assembly request that all necessary steps be taken to ensure fulfilment of the objectives of article 7 concerning evaluation, taking into account the role and competence of relevant intergovernmental bodies.

11. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the addition of the following two programmes to the schedule of in-depth evaluations (reports on those evaluations were to be submitted to the Committee at its forty-third session):

(a) Law of the sea;

(b) Social development.